UNITED NATIONS **E**

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/1997/103
14 July 1997

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Substantive session of 1997
Geneva, 30 June-25 July 1997
Agenda item 7 (c)

REPORTS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES: SOCIAL QUESTIONS

Implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond

Cooperation of the United Nations with the Government of Portugal in holding the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, Lisbon, 8-12 August 1998

Report of the Secretary-General

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
INTRODUCTION		1 - 12	2
I.	PLANNING MISSION: 12-14 MAY 1997	13	4
II.	PRELIMINARY UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE GOVERNMENT OF PORTUGAL	14 - 25	4

Annexes

I.	CALENDAR OF REGIONAL MEETINGS OF GOVERNMENT MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUTH (1997-1998) WHICH WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUTH	7
II.	CALENDAR OF INTERNATIONAL CONSULTATIONS AND MEETINGS TO PREPARE FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUTH (TENTATIVE)	11

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. By resolution 50/81 of 14 December 1995, the General Assembly adopted the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, annexed thereto, as an integral part of that resolution.

2. In paragraph 123 of the Programme of Action, the General Assembly invited current regional and interregional conferences of ministers responsible for youth affairs in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean and Western Asia to intensify cooperation among each other and to consider meeting regularly at the international level under the aegis of the United Nations to provide an effective forum for a focused global dialogue on youth-related issues.

3. In paragraph 124 of the Programme of Action, the General Assembly invited youth-related bodies and organizations of the United Nations system to cooperate with the above-mentioned conferences.

4. In paragraph 118 of the Programme of Action, the General Assembly called on regional intergovernmental meetings of ministers responsible for youth, in cooperation with the concerned United Nations regional commissions, regional intergovernmental organizations and regional non-governmental youth organizations, to make particular contributions to the formulation, implementation, coordination and evaluation of action at the regional level, including periodic monitoring of regional youth programmes.

5. The report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (A/52/60-E/1997/6) contained recommendations on action to be taken to implement the global recommendations of the Programme of Action; a report was to be submitted to the General Assembly through the Commission for Social Development on progress achieved and obstacles encountered.

6. The Commission for Social Development, at its thirty-fifth session, adopted resolution 35/2 on productive employment and sustainable livelihoods, which contained a set of agreed conclusions on productive and sustainable livelihoods. The Commission decided to transmit the agreed conclusions to the Economic and Social Council as a contribution to the high-level segment of its substantive session of 1997. In section VIII of the agreed conclusions, the Commission recommended intensifying efforts to integrate young people in the world of work by providing them with opportunities to acquire sufficient basic education and adequate vocational qualifications and by focusing training and work experience on their specific needs. It indicated that particular efforts were necessary to help young people, especially school leavers who had virtually no qualifications, by offering them either employment or training. In that regard, the Commission warmly welcomed the offer of the Government of Portugal to host in August 1998 a World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, in cooperation with the United Nations, which would deal, inter alia, with the issue of youth employment. The Commission called on all Member States, the programmes and agencies of the United Nations system, youth non-governmental

organizations and intergovernmental organizations to support the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth.

7. The Commission, also at its thirty-fifth session, recommended a draft resolution (draft resolution IV) for adoption by the Economic and Social Council,[1] by which the Council would welcome the offer of the Government of Portugal to host a World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth in cooperation with the United Nations.

8. By paragraph 2 of the draft resolution, the Council would call upon all States, all United Nations bodies, the specialized agencies, the regional commissions and the intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations concerned, in particular youth organizations, to make all possible efforts for the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond, in accordance with their experience, situation and priorities.

9. By paragraph 6 of the draft resolution, the Council would note with appreciation that the Government of Portugal had agreed to support the participation of ministers responsible for youth in the least developed countries as identified by the General Assembly.

10. By paragraph 8 of the draft resolution, the Council would recommend that the report of the Conference be submitted to the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session through the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-seventh session.

11. The Commission, at its thirty-fifth session, also approved the following statement made by the Chairman:

> "It is the understanding of the Commission that the cooperation of the United Nations with the Government of Portugal in holding the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth and any preparatory meetings would not suggest United Nations sponsorship of the Conference, or result in any financial implications. Any assistance provided by the United Nations for the holding of the World Conference and any preparatory meetings will be subject to reimbursement by the Government of Portugal, as relevant.
>
> "It is also understood that United Nations cooperation in the Conference and in any preparatory meetings would be in accordance with the policies of the United Nations relating to meetings and conferences held under its auspices, as established by relevant United Nations resolutions and decisions. The nature and scope of United Nations cooperation with the Government of Portugal will be the subject of an agreement to be concluded between them at the earliest possible date and progress thereon will be reported to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1997."[2]

12. The present progress report has been prepared pursuant to the above-mentioned request.

I. PLANNING MISSION: 12-14 May 1997

13. In order to consult with the Government of Portugal on this matter, a United Nations planning mission was invited, by that Government at no cost to the United Nations, for a three-day meeting with representatives of the Government at Lisbon, from 12 to 14 May to discuss an agreement. These discussions were the first in-depth communications on this matter between the United Nations and the Government of Portugal, and led to the preliminary understanding set out below.

II. PRELIMINARY UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND THE GOVERNMENT OF PORTUGAL

14. The mandates for the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, to be held in cooperation with the United Nations, were recognized as General Assembly resolution 50/81 on the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (annex, paras. 123 and 124 and with reference to para. 118) and draft resolution IV (see paras. 7-10 above) recommended by the Commission for Social Development at its thirty-fifth session for adoption by the Economic and Social Council.

15. The Conference is to be held in Lisbon, Portugal, from 8 to 12 August 1998.

16. The purposes and objectives of the Conference are derived from the above mandates of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council concerning the need for the Conference to provide an effective forum for a focused global dialogue on youth-related issues and a specific means to review, appraise and further promote the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond. The expected outcome of the Conference is a Lisbon Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes by ministers responsible for youth to further promote the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond through more focused and specific intersectoral measures at the regional, national and local/municipal levels.

17. The United Nations and the Government of Portugal agreed on the following pre-conference preparations, at no cost to the United Nations:

(a) Informal consultations on the substantive outcome of the Conference (draft Lisbon Declaration on Youth Policies and Programmes) among States Members of the United Nations at the substantive session of 1997 of the Economic and Social Council and at the fifty-second session of the General Assembly pursuant to their respective items concerning social development (including youth);

(b) Liaison with the existing pre-conference regional and interregional meetings of ministers responsible for youth in order to promote preparatory discussions among the ministers for the World Conference (see annex I below);

(c) Formation of a steering committee composed of the representatives of the regional intergovernmental organizations that convene meetings of ministers responsible for youth (see annex I below) and at least two representatives of ministries responsible for youth in each of the five United Nations regions to

coordinate the substantive preparations for the World Conference (see annex II below).

18. The United Nations and the Government of Portugal agreed also on the convening of inter-agency meetings on youth and youth non-governmental organization (NGO) consultations to prepare their respective substantive contributions to the World Conference (see annex II below).

19. The United Nations and the Government of Portugal agreed on the following categories of participation in the World Conference, at no cost to the United Nations, and estimated approximately 700 participants from:

(a) One hundred and eighty-five States Members of the United Nations;

(b) Eight non-member States recognized by the General Assembly and/or by the United Nations regional commissions (the latter as associate members): Cook Islands, Holy See, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Switzerland, Tonga and Tuvalu;

(c) An observer organization having received a standing invitation from the General Assembly to participate in its sessions and in the work of all conferences convened under the auspices of the United Nations;

(d) Other observers (intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations accredited by the United Nations, and organizations and agencies of the United Nations system);

(e) Individual experts and consultants in the field of youth invited, upon consultation, by the United Nations and the Government of Portugal;

(f) Representatives of information media accredited by the United Nations and the Government of Portugal with access to all public meetings of the World Conference.

20. The United Nations and the Government of Portugal have agreed to have further discussions on the number of United Nations staff needed to assist in the servicing of the Conference. These details will be specifically elaborated in the Agreement between the United Nations and the Government of Portugal. The Director of the United Nations Information Centre in Lisbon will participate in the meetings of the Government's Inter-Ministerial Organizational Committee for the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, so as to advise both on information matters and with respect to the determination of how the Department of Public Information can assist in the preparation, convening and follow-up of the Conference at no cost to the United Nations.

21. The Government of Portugal has, according to rule 32 of the rules of procedure of the Economic and Social Council, confirmed that it will ensure the use of three official working languages of the Council for the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth (English, French and Spanish) and will add additional official languages of the United Nations (Arabic, Chinese and Russian) if sufficient extrabudgetary resources are made available by other Member States and earmarked for that purpose.

22. The Government of Portugal has confirmed its intention to totally guarantee, if needed, the participation expenses in the World Conference of the 49 least developed countries identified by the General Assembly. United Nations policy in that regard is that at least one relevant senior Government official (preferably the minister responsible for youth) from each of the 49 least developed countries be assisted. The host Government has agreed to follow that policy.

23. Concerning non-governmental organization activity prior to or at the World Conference, the Government of Portugal has made a financial allocation to the Portuguese National Youth Council to host the third session of the World Youth Forum of the United Nations System in Portugal, pursuant to General Assembly resolutions 44/59 and 50/81, during the week prior to the World Conference (3-7 August 1998) in order to bring together representatives of non-governmental youth organizations, youth-related organizations and agencies of the United Nations system, and other intergovernmental organizations concerned with youth to contribute to the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth through the identification and promotion of joint initiatives to further its objectives so that they better reflect the interests of youth. The Government has recommended that representatives of the World Youth Forum present the results of the Forum to the World Conference at the opening plenary meeting. The details of the linkages between these two events will be discussed further by their respective Planning Committees. The ideas for other gatherings of non-governmental organizations during the World Conference itself (8-12 August 1998) will be discussed at later stages in the planning process by the organizations concerned, in cooperation with the Government of Portugal and the United Nations.

24. The Government has indicated that it will completely guarantee the legal status, security matters and public information services for the World Conference, as well as the necessary details with regard to the premises, equipment, utilities and supplies, local personnel, airport reception for eminent persons and accompanying delegations, customs formalities and the like. The United Nations and the Government of Portugal have agreed to have further discussions on those matters. The Government has already made 700 pre-hotel reservations in three-, four-, and five-star hotels in Lisbon destined for the participants in the Conference. More details will be discussed between representatives of the United Nations and the Government of Portugal in subsequent planning missions in 1997 and 1998.

25. The Secretary-General would like to express his gratitude to the Government of Portugal for its extraordinary support for the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond.

Notes

[1] Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1997, Supplement No. 6 (E/1997/26), chap. I, sect. A.

[2] Ibid., chap. II, para. 53.

Annex I

CALENDAR OF REGIONAL MEETINGS OF GOVERNMENT MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUTH (1997-1998) WHICH WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUTH

16-19 February 1997, Cairo, Egypt

League of Arab States
Arab Council of Ministers Responsible for Youth and Sports

Contact:
Youth and Sports Department
League of Arab States (LAS)
37 Avenue Kherredine Pacha
Tahrir Square
CAIRO
Egypt
Tel: + 202 1 575 0511
Fax: + 202 1 740 331

April 1997, Bangkok, Thailand

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Youth, Bureau Meeting

Contact:
ASEAN SubCommittee on Youth
c/o National Youth Bureau
Office of the Prime Minister
Government of Thailand
618 Thanon Kitom Makkasan
Phaya Thai, Bangkok, 10400 Thailand
Tel: + 90 312 417 1124
Fax: + 90 312 425 8192

11-12 August 1997, Noumea, New Caledonia

South Pacific Meeting of Ministers
Responsible for Youth, South Pacific Commission (SPC)

Contact:
South Pacific Commission
Youth Development Department
BP D 5 Noumea CEDEX
New Caledonia
Tel: + 687 26 20 00
Fax: + 687 26 38 18

October 1997 (exact date to be advised)

Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Conference of Ministers
Responsible for Youth

Contact:
Ms. Heather Johnson
Deputy Programme Manager
CARICOM Secretariat
Bank of Guyana Building
P.O. Box 10827
Georgetown
Guyana
Tel: + 592 2 519 51-5
Fax: + 592 2 67816

12-13 December 1997, Seychelles

Indian Ocean Commission Conference of Ministers
Responsible for Youth

Contact:
Mr. Eric Arnephy
Director-General
Ministry of Youth and Sports
Seychelles
Tel: + 248 225766
Fax: + 248 22 4733

February/March 1998 (date and venue to be confirmed)

OAU African Conference of Ministers
Responsible for Youth

Contact:
Mr. Valentine K. Ntandayarwo
Acting Director, ESCAS Department
Organization of African Unity (OAU)
P.O. Box 3243
Addis Ababa
Ethiopia
Tel: + 251 151 77 00
Fax: + 251 151 30 36

27-29 April 1998, Bucharest, Romania

Fifth session of the European Meeting of Ministers
Responsible for Youth, Council of Europe

Contact:
European Youth Centre
Council of Europe, F-67075
Strasbourg, Cedex, France
Tel: + 33 88 41 2300
Fax: + 33 88 41 2777

13-15 May 1998, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Third session of the Commonwealth Meeting of Ministers
Responsible for Youth, Commonwealth Youth Programme

Contact:
Commonwealth Secretariat
Marlborough House, Pall Mall
London, SWIY 5HX
United Kingdom
Tel: + 44 171 747 6463
Fax: + 44 171 930 1647

June 1998, Bangkok, Thailand

Second session of the Asia-Pacific Meeting of Senior Government
Officials Responsible for Youth, ESCAP

Contact:
Human Resources Section
Social Development Division
United Nations Economic and Social Commission
for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
United Nations Building
Rajdamnern Avenue
Bangkok, Thailand
Tel: + 662 288 1234
Fax: + 662 288 1030

3-4 August 1998, Lisbon, Portugal

First session of the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth of the Portuguese-Speaking Countries

Contact:
Secretary of State for Youth Affairs
Office of the President of the Council of Ministers
Government of Portugal
Rua Professor Gomes Teixeira
P-1350 Lisbon, Portugal
Tel: + 351 1 397 7703
Fax: + 351 1 397 8336

5-7 August 1998, Lisbon, Portugal

Ninth session of the Ibero-American Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, Ibero-American Youth Organization

Contact:
Organización Ibero Americana de Juventud (OIJ)
Plaza de Colon, 2
Torre II-6 B
28046 Madrid
Spain
Tel: + 341 319 53 04
Fax: + 341 319 90 55

8-12 August 1998, Lisbon, Portugal

World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth, in cooperation with the United Nations

Contact:
Secretary of State for Youth Affairs
Office of the President of the Council of Ministers
Government of Portugal
Rua Professor Gomes Teixeira
P-1350 Lisbon, Portugal
Tel: + 351 1 397 7703
Fax: + 351 1 397 8336

Annex II

CALENDAR OF INTERNATIONAL CONSULTATIONS AND MEETINGS TO PREPARE FOR THE WORLD CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUTH (TENTATIVE)

21-23 July 1997, Geneva

Substantive session of 1997 of the Economic and Social Council: discussion on agenda item 7 (c) (Social questions), including the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth

20-24 October 1997, New York

Discussions in the General Assembly, fifty-second session: Third Committee item concerning the implementation of the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond

October/November 1997, Lisbon, New York or Geneva

First Meeting of the Steering Committee for the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth

Inter-Agency Meeting on Youth and Youth NGO Consultation to prepare for the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth

January/February 1998, New York, Lisbon or Geneva

Second Meeting of the Steering Committee for the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth

Inter-Agency Meeting on Youth and Youth NGO Consultation to prepare for the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth

May/June 1998, Lisbon or Geneva

Feasibility of the third meetings of these groups to be decided.